

## Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN INR-07

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO USMISSION SINAI  
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T STATE 187105

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 375 - AUGUST 8, 1977

MOSCOW, KUWAIT, SANA FOR AMBASSADORS

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED  
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS--NOT RELEASABLE TO  
CONTRACTORS OR CONTRACTOR CONSULTANTS

1. LEBANON. PROGRESS CONTINUES TO BE MADE IN THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHTAURAH AGREEMENT IN LEBANON. A  
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ROUNDUP OF WEAPONS FROM PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS BEGAN  
ON AUGUST 6. THE ROUNDUP WAS BEING CARRIED OUT IN  
COOPERATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL PALESTINIAN  
GROUPS AND WAS GOING SMOOTHLY.

2. LEBANESE ARMY COMMANDER KHOURY SAID THAT HE WOULD  
LIKELY MOVE SOME UNITS SOUTHWARD IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

HE WOULD PREFER, HOWEVER, TO WAIT TWO MONTHS WHEN HIS FORCES WOULD BE BETTER PREPARED. HE WILL DRAW ON UNITS FROM THE BEKAA AND FROM MOUNT LEBANON. EMBASSY BEIRUT NOTES THAT THE UNITS FROM THE BEKAA ARE PURELY LEBANESE

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AND THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT ANY SYRIANS WILL BE INVOLVED. THE EMBASSY EMPHASIZES THAT THESE FORCES HAVE BEEN FULLY REINTEGRATED INTO THE LEBANESE ARMY FOR THREE MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS, THE BEKAA UNITS ARE VIEWED WITH SUSPICION BY THE RIGHTISTS BECAUSE OF THEIR PAST CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE SYRIANS.

3. A CLANDESTINE SOURCE REPORTED THAT THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES ARE NOW EMPLACED AT THE ENTRANCES OF THE OLD CITY OF SIDON. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWO YEARS, THE POLICE FORCE HAS ASSUMED CONTROL OVER THE CHECKPOINTS AND THE POLICE STATION IN SIDON.

4. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, MEANWHILE, THE AL-HUSS GOVERNMENT WAS GRANTED SPECIAL POWERS BY PARLIAMENT FOR FIVE MONTHS IN AREAS DEALING WITH DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY, AND DEFENSE. SIXTY-THREE DEPUTIES SUPPORTED THE GRANTING OF THE POWERS AND THREE WERE OPPOSED.  
(SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)

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5. MIDDLE EAST PEACE. EMBASSY CAIRO NOTES THAT, PRIVATELY, EGYPTIANS NOT INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT THAT NO PROGRESS APPEARS TO HAVE RESULTED FROM SECRETARY VANCE'S VISIT. THE "WORKING GROUP" IDEA IS SEEN, AT BEST, AS A DEVICE TO BUY SOME TIME AND GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF MOMENTUM, AND, AT WORST, AS A HASTILY DEVISED FACESAVING FORMULA.

6. A SENIOR OFFICER IN THE IDF TOLD OUR TEL AVIV DEFENSE ATTACHE THAT CHIEF OF STAFF GUR IS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO BEGIN'S POLICY OF SEEKING AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. GUR HAS SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT A GENEVA CONFERENCE WILL SUCCEED, AND THUS STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT ISRAEL SHOULD RETURN TO THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS.

7. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SECRETARY'S CURRENT PEACE EFFORTS, PLO LEADERS ARE TRYING TO CEMENT ARAB SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE. IN PART, THEIR EFFORTS REFLECT THEIR FEAR THAT SOME ARAB GOVERNMENTS, PARTICULARLY JORDAN AND EGYPT, MIGHT BE WILLING TO ABANDON DEMANDS FOR FULL PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE PROCESS, AT LEAST IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF NEGOTIATIONS. THEY ALSO REFLECT

THEIR FEAR THAT THE TRIP COULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD RESUMING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THUS, THEY WANT TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION IN THE PEACE PROCESS.

8. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE NOTE THAT THE PLO'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY ARAFAT, HELD A SERIES OF MEETINGS ON JULY 30 AND 31, IN WHICH THE PLO'S STANCE ON KEY MIDEAST ISSUES WAS DISCUSSED. SOON THEREAFTER, ARAFAT BEGAN A TOUR OF ARAB CAPITALS, STOPPING IN DAMASCUS, SAUDI ARABIA, AND CAIRO. HIS VISITS TO SYRIA AND SAUDI ARABIA PRECEDED THE SECRETARY'S BY ONLY A FEW DAYS, AND, IN FACT, HE RETURNED TO TAIF FROM CAIRO YESTERDAY FOR FURTHER TALKS WITH SAUDI LEADERS.

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9. ARAFAT'S STRATEGY IN THIS EFFORT IS APPARENTLY TO TRADE PALESTINIAN SUPPORT FOR ARAB ISSUES IN EXCHANGE FOR BACKING IN THE PEACE PROCESS. FOR EXAMPLE, SYRIA AND THE PLO REPORTEDLY ACHIEVED A "WRITTEN AGREEMENT" RECENTLY ON A MUTUAL STANCE ON RESUMING NEGOTIATIONS. IN RETURN, THE PLO AGREED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS IN LEBANON. YESTERDAY, CAIRO'S AL-AHRAM REPORTED THAT ARAFAT, IN CONSULTATIONS WITH SADAT, HAD APPROVED THE EGYPTIAN POSITION PAPER GIVEN TO THE SECRETARY. (THE VOICE OF PALESTINE WAS MORE RESERVED, HOWEVER, SAYING ONLY THAT SADAT HAD "INFORMED" ARAFAT ABOUT THE DOCUMENT.) GIVEN ARAFAT'S ABILITY TO EQUIVOCATE, HE MAY HAVE LED SADAT TO ASSUME THAT HE HAD CONCURRED, IN THE HOPE THAT THIS MANEUVER WOULD ASSURE CONTINUED EGYPTIAN SUPPORT.

10. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PLO HAS APPARENTLY ACTIVELY RENEWED ITS CONSIDERATION OF SOME STEPS THAT IT MIGHT TAKE TO APPEAR MORE MODERATE AND TO POSITION ITSELF BETTER TO INSURE ITS INCLUSION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. ONE SUCH STEP MAY BE TO REVIVE THE IDEA OF FORMING A GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE. SADAT HAS LONG ARGUED THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD FURTHER LEGITIMIZE THE PLO.

11. THE SAUDIS, HOWEVER, ALSO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN PLO CALCULATIONS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THEY HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THE PLO TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING AND MAY BE WORKING WITH IT TO ARRIVE AT A COMPROMISE FORMULA WHICH COULD SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR ITS INCLUSION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

12. IT IS POSSIBLE, IN OUR VIEW, THAT SAUDI ARABIA  
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MAY BE THE ARAB STATE MOST ABLE TO CONVINCE THE PLO TO TAKE HERETOFORE UNPALATABLE STEPS. THE SAUDIS PROVIDE MUCH FINANCING TO MAINSTREAM PLO GROUPS AND ARE ON GOOD TERMS WITH ARAFAT AND KHALID AL-HASAN. MOREOVER, PLO LEADERS RECOGNIZE THE PREEMINENT ROLE THAT SAUDI ARABIA

PLAYS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE LEVERAGE THAT IT HAS AS A RESULT OF ITS FINANCIAL AID. SAUDI ARABIA, IF IT BECAME SUFFICIENTLY DISPLEASED WITH THE PLO, COULD UTILIZE ITS FINANCIAL CLOUT TO UNDERMINE THE SUPPORT OF EGYPT AND SYRIA FOR THE PLO. THUS, PLO LEADERS MAY BE WILLING TO ACCEDE TO SAUDI PRESSURE.

13. THE SOVIET MEDIA, AFTER TAKING A GENERALLY FACTUAL APPROACH IN ITS REPORTING JUST PRIOR TO THE SECRETARY'S DEPARTURE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, HAS BECOME MORE NEGATIVE AND ACERBIC IN ITS COMMENTARIES AS THE VISIT HAS PROGRESSED. IN PARTICULAR, SOVIET EDITORIALS HAVE HAMMERED AT THE THEME THAT THE MISSION WILL FAIL BECAUSE, AS PRAVDA SAID YESTERDAY, THE US ADHERES TO A "ONE-SIDED, PRO-ISRAELI ORIENTATION."

14. IN THIS VIEW, TASS CHARGED FRIDAY THAT THE US HAD UNDERTAKEN A "PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN" TO PORTRAY US POLICY AS EVENHANDED WHEN, IN FACT, IT WAS BIASED TOWARD ISRAEL AND DESIGNED TO FURTHER US INTERESTS IN THE REGION, SUCH AS OIL. TASS NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD SIGNED THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE ACT ON FRIDAY AND ASSERTED THAT THE BILL WAS "DIRECTED, ABOVE ALL, AT A FURTHER BUILD-UP OF ISRAEL'S MILITARY MACHINE."

15. CONCOMITANTLY, SOVIET COMMENTATORS HAVE STRESSED THAT THE SOVIET UNION WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORTS THE ARAB CAUSE. THEY HAVE CONTINUALLY UNDERSCORED THE SOVIET POSITION THAT ARAB INTERESTS MUST BE TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND THAT THE PALESTINIANS

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MUST HAVE A ROLE IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS.

16. THE TWO-PRONGED THRUST OF THESE COMMENTARIES-- IDENTIFYING THE US WITH ISRAEL AND STRESSING SOVIET SUPPORT OF THE ARABS--IS DESIGNED TO:

(A) EMPHASIZE TO THE VARIOUS PARTIES THAT THE SOVIET

UNION IS A KEY ACTOR IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS;

(B) INDICATE TO THE ARABS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE THEIR ONLY TRUE FRIEND;

(C) STRESS TO THE ARABS THAT RELIANCE ON THE US TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL CAN ONLY LEAD TO FAILURE.

17. IMPLICIT IS THE SOVIET FEAR THAT THEY MIGHT BE CUT OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS. ALONG THIS LINE, TASS ASSERTED THAT THE US WAS GOING BEYOND ITS ROLE AS A MEDIATOR AND WAS SEEKING TO "BECOME THE ONLY ARBITER" BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND ARABS. THIS SOVIET WORRY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INTENSIFIED BY THE "WORKING GROUP" CONCEPT ADVANCED BY SADAT. (SECRET) CHRISTOPHER

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